

Alaska Parent Engagement Program 2009/2010 Annual Report

contents

- 1 Letter from Al Tamanji, Jr.
- 2 Letter from Paula Pawlowski
- 3 Introduction of New Logo
- 4 Goal I: Develop Team of Parents from Each School District
Goal II: Develop and Publish Web Site
- 5-6 Goal III: Become the Recognized Organization for Parent Engagement
- 7 Goal IV & Recap
- 8 PTA National Standards



"We have a dream." Those are words that can best describe ideas that were put into motion in 2004 by Alaska PTA. The dream and vision was to promote Parent Engagement in the State of Alaska. With No Child Left Behind just ramping up and realizing the challenges that parents face in Alaska, Alaska PTA's question is, "what can we do to help?"

That may seem like a simple question with a simple answer and on paper it is; get parents involved and engaged in their child's education. But as we all know too well is that what seems easy on paper is not always realistic in life. Parents want to be involved but there are many obstacles standing in their way. Our goal was to provide them with the tools needed to work around and through those obstacles so they could reach out and be involved and engaged.

As our dream moved forward our goal was to start with tools and resources that were already available to us not only through our previous projects but also from National PTA, Department of Education, State of Alaska and other programs. We realized that this project was going to take partnerships outside of our normal circle to make this work.

In 2009 after several years of educating, promoting and talking about the challenges Alaska PTA received a Federal Education Grant from the US Department of Education under the Fund for Improvement of Education to create and build the program. We were granted \$238,000 dollars for a three year program. To say we were caught off guard by award of the grant would be an understatement. The quote that we use is "be careful what you ask for, you may get it." That could not be more true with this program.

In our first year, we have hired our Parent Engagement Director, brought together a core team to help guide the program forward, built partnerships and programs with other agencies and started using and creating programs and tools needed to move the project forward. We have started working with other agencies to build the Parent Engagement Program into what we envisioned our dream to be.

We have made several accomplishments with the program during our first year and are very excited to meet and exceed our goals in our second year. I encourage you to read our report and I hope you see what we have accomplished and where our future will be leading us. We realize that we cannot accomplish everything in three years, we will be looking for additional funding so we can continue to be a vital part of Parent Engagement in Alaska.

Sincerely,

*Al Tamagni, Jr.
Vice President, Parent Engagement
Alaska PTA*

"Parent Engagement" is a phrase that is tossed around frequently, but I am never sure how people are visualizing what Parent Engagement looks like. Many people think that Parent Engagement is only recognized at the school during the school hours, but the truth is, many parents are working during the school hours and can promote education success better outside the school day.

I like the definition currently used by Harvard University stating Parent Engagement is "from cradle to career." It is closer to what I do as a parent and I am comfortable in that role.

The strategies that have been identified and researched by Johns Hopkins University give six different ideas of what Parent Engagement can look like. National PTA has taken the six strategies and developed, with the help of Anne Henderson, an evaluation tool for schools to use and an implementation tool to move toward results.

It has become clear that an advocate is needed to educate parents on how to be involved with the education system. In the beginning, a parent thinks that his or her job is to simply send their child to school. They soon discover their role is much bigger and more complicated. As their child approaches middle school and high school, the parent finds more questions than answers about his or her role as a parent.

Parents can learn from other parents, but if there is a role for parents it needs to be agreed upon, widely distributed and clearly understood. PTA was formed over 108 years ago and yet the association is as critical today as it was over a century ago.

The goal of the Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program is to clearly define and have accepted, a definition of Parent Engagement and to keep the conversation student focused to bring success to all children, not just a few.

PTA. Every Child. One Voice.

Sincerely,

Paula Pawlowski

*Paula Pawlowski, Director
Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program*

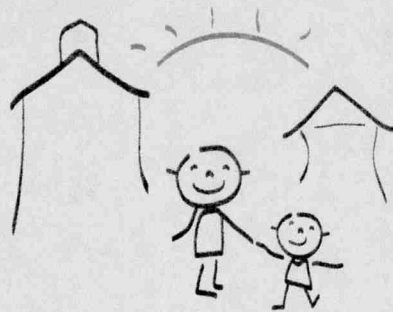


New Logo for Parent Engagement Program

A new logo was developed and approved by National PTA for the Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program. This logo was to connect the family and the school, parent and child, grandparents and grand children, siblings, etc. Letterhead, business cards, web site and handouts all are branded with the new logo.

A core team of knowledgeable, experienced people was asked to volunteer to develop goals, activities and outcomes for the project. Not surprisingly, they were all previous Alaska PTA leaders.

Ann McCoy	President	1985 - 1989
Abbe Hensley	President	1989 - 1993
Sue Hull	President	1993 - 1995
Paula Pawlowski	President	1997 - 1999
Bunny Schaeffer	1st Vice President	1997 - 1999
Suellen Appellof	President	2003 - 2005
Al Tamagni, Jr.	President	2007 - 2009



Parent Engagement Program
 Alaska PTA®

GOAL 1: Develop a Team of Parents from Each School District in Alaska to provide parent-to-parent training opportunities for Parent Engagement.

Developing "Schools of Excellence"

When families, schools and communities work together student achievement improves, teacher morale improves and family, school and community connections multiply. Using the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships to expand the knowledge of quality indicators, successful practices and measurements for each standard were highlighted by the participants. The steps for each school are, Building awareness, planning for action, implementing standards based on individual school improvement plans and then celebrating success by receiving a flag for each school that reads, "This is a School of Excellence." Local PTAs, Alaska PTA Region Vice Presidents, and others received training, tips and tools to pass on to parents, teachers and community members.

AmeriCorps Training

Eight AmeriCorps workers at the Middle School Partnership Program (Mountain Village, Hooper Bay, Mears, North Pole, Barnette Magnet, Ryan, Gruening, Saint Mary's, Brevig Mission) and local Anchorage PTAs received training for Building Successful Partnerships and received tools for successful presentation skills using the National PTA Standards and individual school report cards. The AmeriCorps trainers will be able to use the standards to plan for individual school sites after conducting community cafes.

Other Partnerships

Using the model from National PTA on Emerging Minority Leaders, the Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program has built partnerships with the Anchorage School District Minority Education Concerns Committee, Hispanic Affairs Council of Alaska and Bridge Builders of Anchorage to participate in three outreach community cafes discussing Parent Engagement and a final conference called "Parents as Leaders" hosted by Alaska PTA. Planning is continuing with the Diversity Committee led by Juan San Miguel.

GOAL II: Develop and Publish Parent Engagement Web Site.

The web site, <http://alaskaparentengagement.org> was designed to help all types of parents. To reduce the amount of time searching for what you want, the site is designed by age group. For example, if you are looking for information that a secondary parent can use, you can go directly to that link. Workshops, events, research and military have their own separate links. We will continue to provide more content on our blog and on Facebook.

ALASKA PTA BENEFITS

48% of
Alaskan
Students

Represented by
Alaska PTA

143,336
Volunteer
Hours

\$3,583,400

The VALUE of Alaska's PTAs
volunteer work for communities,
schools, and children

9500
Alaska
PTA
Members
and growing

141
Active
Individual
PTA Units

2009/2010

TEACHERS
PARENTS

awareness

Partnerships

GOAL III:

Become the Recognized Organization for Parent Engagement. by Developing New Partnerships

A Year In Review

The bulk of our work this year has involved developing partnerships with some of the usual suspects and with some surprises as well. Beyond the school doors are a wealth of organizations and individuals who also are concerned about our children's future, wellness and higher education. We will continue to reach out and connect.

Best Beginnings

Best Beginnings, Alaska's Early Childhood Investment and the Alaska Parent Engagement Program attend many of the same meetings to promote Parent Engagement at all levels of a child's life. The Alaska PTA members can use our non-profit mailing status to mail books through a partnership with the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The Alaska PTA has attended and reviewed a State Plan for Early Literacy to be presented to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for approval.

Alaska Dept. of Education and Early Development
Partnering with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Alaska Parent Information Resource Center (AKPIRC) and hundreds of attendees, teachers, parents, community members and agencies have met together several times to develop quality indicators as a State Plan for Parent Engagement that is wrapped around the Six Standards of Parent Family Partnerships. The plan will be presented to the Alaska State Board of Education for a confirmation vote and then the work begins.

AKPIRC

As an advisory member of AKPIRC, we attend meetings quarterly and attended the annual National PTA /PIRC convention in Memphis, Tennessee. The AKPIRC invited Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program to attend an all day training with the Solid Foundation group while Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program invited AKPIRC to attend leadership workshops for NPTA.

Alaska School Boards Association

Alaska School Boards Association also is looking to reconnect in ways that will bring the roles of policy makers and parent engagement that will help provide a method for every school to organize a parent group to connect the parents and the schools centered on student success. The advantage of an organized PTA is that the group has bylaws, access to insurance and 501(c)(3) status, and resources and training throughout the year.

Higher Education & Career Readiness Taskforce

The Parent Engagement Program has been part of the audience of the Joint House and Senate Task Force on Career and Higher Education Committee. A well-balanced committee of educators, students, public and private colleges, businesses and education associations has met around the state to collect good practices and testimony that would help grasp the need of remediation and programs that keep students on track with higher education and career training. Without a parent having a seat on the committee, we have attended each meeting and have been generously given time at the end of each meeting for testimony by the co-chairs, Representative Mike Chenault and Senator Gary Stevens. A final report will be presented to the Legislature by April 1, 2011.



*"In what ways
can I motivate the players
to increase
parent engagement?"*



Department of Education and Early Development, Dept. of Labor

The Parent Engagement Program participated in the State Plan for Career Technical Education facilitated by both the Department of Education and Early Development and the Department of Labor. The mission of the Alaska Career and Technical Education staff is to assist schools in providing students with skills necessary for a successful transition to postsecondary education or work and a desire for life-long learning in a global society. Find the whole report at http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/CTE/docs/CTE_State_Plan.pdf.

Alaska Business Education Compact

Alaska PTA has been a member of the Alaska Business Education Compact(ABC) for several years and has participated in a business partnership with Putting Alaska Resources to Work (PARW) which is primarily made up of oil and gas companies to get the word out to students and parents about different requirements and benefits of jobs within the gas and oil sector.

Grand Families Network Project

Meeting with the Grand Families Network Project allows the Parent Engagement Program to connect together for the growing need of grandparents raising their grandchildren and the special needs of this population group. Understanding the changes in academic requirements, partnerships with schools, social and network changes are only a few of the challenges facing grandparents. We will continue to provide information on our web site to gather grandparents together and provide them with current information.

United Way

The Parent Engagement Program participated on the steering committee of Anchorage United for Youth Summit with United Way, bringing over 40 organizations together by planning workshops and events for community members and youth. The Anchorage United for Youth Summit was held September 18th, 2010 with 135 attendees, 107 adults and 28 youth representing nonprofit agencies, state, local, and federal government, businesses, tribal organizations, community organizations and community members. The theme of the summit was "Anchorage United for Youth - Community working together to create a better future for all Anchorage youth".

Alaska's Promise

The Parent Engagement Program met with Alaska's Promise to examine points that may be united in mission, programs and crossover to close the achievement gap by providing information online and in print that will help parents understand such efforts. More will come as the organizations continue to meet.

Military Support Meetings

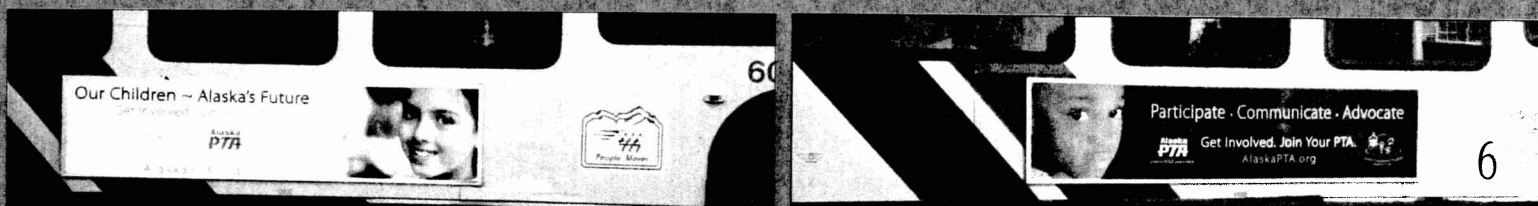
Military parents are a huge influence on Alaska's population, so the Parent Engagement Program continues to meet at trainings such as "Coming Around Military Families", attending family support meetings for both Air Force and Army bases and providing special workshops and publications.

Partnership Conclusion Here

The Parent Engagement Program has much work to accomplish under this goal, newsletter articles, conferences and recruiting organizations to formulate partnerships with, to help parents at all levels remain connected with their child's education.

Public Campaign

The Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program created a public campaign to encourage people to join their PTA by developing five positive messages and put the signs onto five different local buses for 12 weeks. We then put the messages onto banners for display at five Fairbanks schools.





RurAL CAP

The Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP) is a statewide non-profit association improving the lives of Alaskans and has recently entered into a partnership with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program, AKPIRC and other nonprofit organizations to improve the connectivity with schools and middle school students. We know that students become disconnected early and know that students begin to deselect education early in life. Working at eight middle schools, four urban and four rural, AmeriCorps workers have been hired at each site, trained and are working to bring those connections closer together working with the education community and the local community to support middle school students. The Parent Engagement Program has provided training with the standards, project planning and mentoring to one of the sites.



GOAL IV:

Develop a Parent Engagement Class for Teacher Preparation Programs.



NEA

Re-energizing our partnership with NEA after an absence of many years, our Parent Engagement Director spoke on partnerships between parents and teachers at NEA Alaska's fall Leadership Conference and will develop a workshop for Parent Engagement for next fall's Leadership Conference. We will work together on NEA's program "Read Across America" and look toward informational brochures that can be endorsed by both organizations.

Final Thoughts on the Year

Working to build awareness of the Alaska PTA Parent Engagement Program has taken much of the beginning year, and it has helped set the direction for the next two years. There has been agreement across all levels that parents need to be at the table and that people do not know what that looks like and how to determine success. We are looking forward to the next year and continued success.

Standard 1:
*Welcoming all
Families into the
School Community*

Standard 2:
*Communicating
Effectively*

Standard 3:
*Supporting
Student Success*

Standard 4:
*Speaking Up for
Every Child*

Standard 5:
Sharing Power

Standard 6:
*Collaborating with
Community*